

pensatory straightening of the tail to make up for the bad alignment produced by the callous overgrowth, a feature commonly found in relation to malunited fractures.

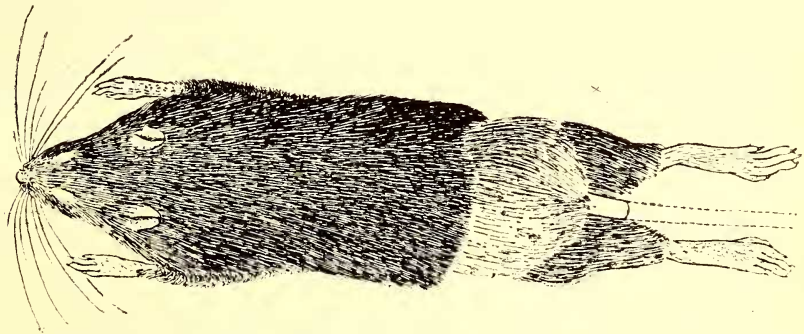
That the condition is of traumatic origin I am certain. It has no relation to the so-called 'claw' or 'prickle' at the end of the tail of the lion and other felines (known since the days of Homer) which is a purely cutaneous phenomenon without relation to the bony skeleton, except for the support given to the horny process by the tip of the last caudal vertebra (vide Turner, *J. Anat.* 7, 271-273 and earlier authorities there cited)".—Eds.]

4. AN ABNORMAL SPECIMEN OF *MUS PLATYTHRIX GRAHAMI* RYLEY (RODENTIA: MURIDAE) FROM KHANDALA, BOMBAY PROVINCE

(With a text-figure)

A specimen of the mouse collected at Khandala (W. Ghats) in October, 1949, was sent by the Bombay Natural History Society to the Zoological Survey of India for determination. As the specimen is of considerable interest, the writer has thought it fit to report on it.

It differs from the two other specimens of apparently the same form, collected later from the same locality, in the possession of a peculiar, more or less triangular area occupying nearly one third of the total head and body length, on the posterior part of the dorsal surface. The most remarkable feature of this area is that the spines, which are the chief covering material for the rest of the body, have been reduced to the point of almost total disappearance, and only a very few can be made out by careful examination. Their place has been



An abnormal specimen of *Mus platythrix grahami* Ryley from Khandala.  $\times 1/1$  (approx).

(Due to the backward bend of the spines and the hairs the actual limits of the spineless area are not well-defined in the drawing.)

taken by the hairs which are much more numerous than on the rest of the body, and are almost the sole elements of body coat of this area. The tips of the hairs lend a general apricot-buff colour to this zone which, thus, becomes very prominently contrasted against the anterior part

of the dorsal surface which has a general black hue due to the black tips of the spines. The few spines which are found in the area under consideration are also tipped with apricot-buff like the hairs. The spineless area gradually passes into more posterior parts where the spines again preponderate over the hairs.

The body measurements in the fresh state are wanting. The tail is broken but healed up leaving a short stump behind. As compared with the skull of one of the specimens collected later (in the other it is damaged), the skull of the abnormal specimen is slightly smaller and has its molar crowns less worn out, thereby indicating its younger age. There appears to be every justification to consider the specimen as only an abnormal individual of the form; but, at present, no plausible explanation can be given as to the cause of disappearance of spines on a particular part of the body.

ZOOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA,  
INDIAN MUSEUM, CALCUTTA,  
5th November, 1950.

H. KHAJURIA

[The attention of the Zoological Survey of India was drawn to the fact that the original specimen was sent to the British Museum where it was identified as *Mus phillipsi fernandoni* (of which they had only 2 skins and 2 skulls for comparison) but with rather unusual pelage.

Dr. B. S. Chauhan replied that the Zoological Survey had followed Ellerman's Key to the Rodents inhabiting India, Burma and Ceylon (*J. Mammalogy*, Vol. 28, Nos. 3 and 4, 1947, p. 386) which reads:—

'*Fernandoni* resembles *platythrix* in a general way, except for its apparently shortened muzzle, the diastema being normally less than one-quarter of occipito-nasal length.'

He goes on to say that the diastema in the specimen under consideration definitely exceeds the proportion stated above, and that after a careful consideration of all the characters of the specimens he finds no reason to revise the Zoological Survey's identification.

It may also be pointed out that *fernandoni* was originally described from Ceylon and is believed to be restricted to the island.—Eds.]

##### 5. ALBINISM IN *RATTUS CREMORIVENTER* (MILLER)

(With 4 text-figures and a map)

Recent correspondence in these pages (48: 579 and 49: 298) has drawn attention to the lack of exact knowledge about the natural occurrence of albinism in rats, and to the doubt which must always exist as to whether its occurrence in house rats can be regarded as natural or due to the release or escape of domestic white rats. It is, therefore, of considerable interest to record the occurrence of partial albinism in a rat which is reasonably certain to be free from any admixture of domestic strains.

In connexion with work on scrub typhus, a large number of small animals are regularly collected from within a radius of about fifteen